



ANTECHINUS MACULATUS.

J. Gould and W. C. Richter, del. et lith.

H. A. Mandel & Walton, imp.

ANTECHINUS MACULATUS, *Gould.*

Spotted Antechinus.

Antechinus maculatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Dec. 9, 1851.

THE progress of civilization over the vast continent of Australia cannot fail to be the means of bringing to light many species of small quadrupeds at present entirely unknown to the zoologist; and the immense brushes which stretch along the southern and eastern coasts in particular, will, I feel confident, afford many treasures in this department of zoological science. During my short rambles in some of those extensive brushes, I frequently saw among the fallen leaves and thick herbage, many small, agile, mouse-like marsupials, which I found it impossible to procure, as they were too light to spring the ordinary traps, however lightly they might be set, and I was unprovided with any more suitable contrivances for capturing them; it must also be remembered that the difficulty of collecting them is much increased by their being all more or less nocturnal in their habits. Mr. Strange, however, from time to time sends me, among other objects, one of these little quadrupeds; and it is to him that we are indebted for our knowledge of the pretty species figured in the accompanying Plate, which was procured in the brushes near the river Clarence, a little to the southward of Moreton Bay. Contrarieties with regard to colouring and disposition of markings continually occur in the Australian Fauna, of which the present little animal offers another instance; since, contrary to the normal rule, we find it ornamented on the lower instead of the upper parts of the body.

The animal sent by Mr. Strange is a fully adult male and may be thus described:—

The fur is short, dense, and closely applied to the skin; the general tint of the upper surface is dark blackish brown, minutely grizzled with yellowish brown; lower part of the flanks and the under surface of the body dark brownish slate-grey, ornamented with oblong spots of white arranged in irregular rows in the direction of the body: there is also a streak of white down the centre of the throat.

The figures are of the natural size.